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of Hebrew prophecy, regarding which the written records are less complete than in the later ages. The prophets of these early times left no such ample rescripts of their messages as did those of the great prophetic centuries which we shall soon take up. Consider also the tendency of any people to idealize the past and its heroes. May this habit affect in any way the traditions we have regarding the prophets whose work we have been studying? On the other hand, compare the high character of their teaching regarding God, the national relations to him, social justice, and personal responsibility, with the best ethical and religious teaching of contemporary peoples from 1500 to 800 B.C. In spite of the crudeness, limited views of the divine character and purpose, and drastic methods of accomplishing the ends they sought, do not these men reveal an exalted conception of religion and morality, which will admirably prepare for the more adequate ministry of later prophets?

## SUGGESTIONS TO LEADERS OF CLASSES USING THE FOREGOING COURSE

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BY GEORGIA L. CHAMBERLIN

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### INTRODUCTORY

Modern religious education is seeking to bring to people of the present day the ideals which will most quickly and effectively work out into social uplift and religious inspiration for all the world. Unquestionably the simple teaching of Jesus is the supreme summary of principles upon which our modern life must rest. The very simplicity of this teaching, however, seems at times to hinder its application to the complexities of our modern civilization. There is nothing which so deepens our respect for the teaching of Jesus and our understanding of it as a study of the ethical and spiritual progress of the Hebrews, under the leadership of their great teachers, who faced daily problems different in environment from those of modern times, but produced by the same inherent weaknesses in human nature, coupled with failure to comprehend the true character of God.

It is the purpose of the course of study which these suggestions accompany to give to classes, through their own study of the biblical literature, a conception of the growth of those religious ideals which were earlier than the days of Jesus, and which prepared the way for his work. These are studied, however, not simply historically, but with the express intention of showing how similar to our own problems were those of the prophets, and how valiantly and with what self-denying courage these men of Israel presented their views to the people of their own times, even as great leaders today, with a vision of truth, give even life itself in their efforts to bring others to their point of view.

The studies are arranged in daily portions in order that those who are working alone may have a specific task for each day. Those who will work in clubs may follow the same plan or may group the work in one period. If the meeting of

the group is held weekly, useful programs follow, four of which are given for each month. If the meetings are less frequent, these programs can be combined or curtailed. No leader should allow his work to be hampered by the use of such programs when he prefers to handle the work in some other way. The local situation should control the method of work.

For years it has been the custom of the American Institute of Sacred Literature to urge those who were not trained professionally as religious teachers to conduct clubs using the suggestions which were given, but not in the capacity of teachers, simply as one member of the club leading the others. Many of the most successful clubs have been of this character. On the other hand, many groups are composed of people who under the leadership of the pastor of the church are exploring the Bible and from their study are coming into a greater appreciation of the message of the pulpit.

The review questions for each month's work are appended to these suggestions. These questions will be furnished upon duplicate sheets arranged for written answers to all members of the Institute.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes it may be the judgment of the leader that the discussion of all of these questions, or of a selected number, would bring the best results at a given meeting. Whatever will lead to study by the members of the group, and to the expression of the results of their study in interesting discussion, is helpful. In connection with each program, a general introductory topic is assigned to the leader and the remaining topics may be distributed to members, all participating in the discussions which follow.

#### PROGRAM I

1. General introduction to the study: A presentation of the new and the old conceptions of the prophet, a comparison at the same time of the latter with modern religious teachers and social reformers [*Leader*].

2. The stories of Moses.

3. The characteristics of Moses' conception of God.

4. Moses' contribution to the religious ideals of Israel.

5. Moses' contribution to the social and political ideals of Israel.

*Discussion:* Which of the Ten Commandments shows the most advanced conception?

#### PROGRAM II

1. Social, ethical, and political bearings of the phrase "And every man did what was right in his own eyes," as illustrated by the times of the "Judges" [*Leader*].

2. Stories of the Judges.

3. The main conception of God presented in these stories.

4. The probable facts concerning the conquest of Canaan by the Hebrews.

5. The social virtues deemed estimable in the times of the Judges.

6. The religious customs of the Hebrews in this period.

<sup>1</sup> Members of the Institute pay a fee of \$0.50 for registration and receive the material of this course in nine monthly pamphlets, October, 1915, to June, 1916.

*Discussion:* Had the Hebrews in the times of the Judges advanced in religious and social ideals beyond those of the exodus and wilderness?

PROGRAM III

1. A comparison of the early prophecy in Israel with the oracles of other ancient nations [*Leader*].
2. A description of the life at Shiloh.
3. The Ark and its significance in the religious ideals of Israel.
4. Samuel as a circuit judge and his relation to the social ideals of his world.
5. Samuel's conception of God and its effect on his relation with Saul and the kingdom.
6. New ideals of character and national life, represented in the stories of David.

*Discussion:* How do you account for the recorded approval of Jehovah of the cruelties of ancient war? Are we facing the same problem at this time?

PROGRAM IV

1. The history of the idea of the tribal God or the God of a single country [*Leader*].
2. Elijah's problem and its causes.
3. The story of his vindication.
4. Elijah as the champion of social justice.

*Discussion:* Did Elijah make progress in his own lifetime in his conception of God?

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why is it necessary to study the Old Testament in order to understand Christianity?
2. Through what group of teachers did Israel receive religious inspiration and moral instruction?
3. What other elements influenced the growth and development of Israel's religion?
4. What portions of the Old Testament are attributable to the prophets?
5. Who were the Hebrews?
6. When and under what leadership does tradition record that they came to Palestine?
7. Under what circumstances did Egyptian influences come into their life?
8. How did Midianite influence contribute to their growth?
9. What do early Hebrew laws show to have been the ideals of the leaders concerning
  - a) treatment of tenants?
  - b) treatment of strangers?
  - c) simplicity in worship?
  - d) respect for parents and reverence for rulers?
  - e) compensation for injuries?

10. What place did Moses hold in the political and religious history of the Hebrews?
11. Describe in a quoted sentence the religious and social conditions in Canaan in the days of the Judges.
12. Who were the "Judges" and what did they do as a class?
13. Name several things which the story of Samuel as a boy discloses concerning religious customs and beliefs in Israel at that time.
14. Describe the special work of Samuel as "judge."
15. What great religious truth did Samuel pronounce to Saul after his victory over the Amalekites?
16. What were the causes which led to social dissatisfaction in Solomon's reign?
17. What was the result of a continuance of his policy in the following reign?
18. What was the problem that confronted Elijah as a religious teacher?
19. Do you think that he dealt wisely with the situation?
20. Give a definition of the word "prophet" based upon your study of this month.

#### REFERENCE BOOKS

Under this head will be included, by chapter or page, reference books which bear particularly on the work of each month. The general list for the study of the history and prophecy will not be repeated. A careful study of the history is essential to the understanding of the work of the prophet in each period.

Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, either the four-volume edition or the one-volume edition, is invaluable in this study. Special articles covering the main topics will be named each month, but the leader will find many other articles cognate to the subject which will not be particularly mentioned.

For Use Throughout the Course: Henry Preserved Smith, *Old Testament History*; Kent, *The History of the Hebrews*, four volumes; Kent, *Historical Bible*, six volumes; Ottley, *Short History of the Hebrews*; Wade, *Old Testament History*; Smith, *The Prophet and His Problems*.

Special for Study I: W. Robertson Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, lectures 1 and 2; Duff, *The Theology and Ethics of the Hebrews*, parts 1 and 2; Mitchell, *The Ethics of the Old Testament*, chaps. i-iv; Cornill, *Prophets of Israel*, pp. 1-36; Batten, *Hebrew Prophets*, chaps. i-iv, vi, viii; Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, lectures 1, 2, 3; Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, pp. 36-124; Welch, *Religion of Israel under the Kingdom*, chaps. i, ii, iii; Hastings, *Bible Dictionary*, articles on Elijah, Moses, Prophecy and Prophets, David, Solomon, Ark of Covenant, Ahab, Baal.